

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2886

INFO SECDEF

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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CINCPAC

S E C R E T LONDON 10806

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NZ, SN, UK

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND/UK MANAGEMENT OF SINGAPORE NAVAL
FACILITIES

REF: (A) STATE 158208 (B) SINGAPORE 2907 (NOTAL)
(C) LONDON 7941

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REF. (A) WE INFORMED BEVAN, HEAD
OF FCO SOUTHWEST PACIFIC DEPARTMENT, AND HIS DEPUTY, DE
COURCY-IRELAND, THAT USG IS NO LONGER PURSUING PROPOSAL
THAT NEW ZEALAND MANAGE NAVAL FACILITIES. WE ALSO NOTED
U.S. INTEREST IN PROPOSED UK ARRANGEMENT REF. (C).

2. BEVAN WAS PLEASED TO HEAR THAT U.S. IS CONSIDERING
UK PROPOSAL. UK IS READY TO PROCEED TO IMPLEMENT THE
PROPOSAL AT AN EARLY DATE IF USG DECIDES TO GO AHEAD.
ON RECEIPT OF FINAL U.S. AGREEMENT TO PROCEED, BRITISH
PROBABLY WOULD ASK US TO TELL GOS THAT WE ARE NO
LONGER PURSUING THE NEW ZEALAND OPTION AND THAT WE
BELIEVE MOST SATISFACTORY SOLUTION WOULD BE ALONG LINES
ALREADY PROVISIONALLY WORKED OUT BETWEEN UK AND GOS. UK
WOULD THEN BEGIN DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH GOS IN EFFORT

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TO GET LATTER TO DESIGNATE AGENCY FOR MANAGEMENT OF

BERTHS. ONCE AGENCY IS DESIGNATED UK WOULD BEGIN TO WORK OUT NUTS AND BOLTS OF BERTHING TERMS.

3. THE UK HAS INFORMED GONZ IN GENERAL TERMS OF PLAN IN REF. (C) BUT HAS NOT INDICATED EXTENT OF CONSULTATIONS WITH GOS. UK HAS NOT GIVEN GONZ INFORMATION ON DETAILS OF PROPOSAL, ONLY A ROUGH OUTLINE. NEW ZEALAND HIGH COMMISSION MAINTAINS INTEREST IN THE PROJECT AND MAKES INQUIRIES ABOUT U.S. REACTIONS ON A REGULAR BASIS. SO FAR FCO HAS INDICATED NO FIRM U.S. RESPONSE RECEIVED.

4. UK OFFICIALS CHARACTERIZED THEIR PROPOSAL AS "FIRM" AND READY TO IMPLEMENT AS SOON AS U.S. CONCURS. ON NOTIFICATION, DE COURCY-IRELAND THOUGHT THAT 24 HOURS HAD BEEN MENTIONED. BEVAN WAS MORE CONSERVATIVE IN THAT HE WOULD NOT QUOTE A NUMBER. BEVAN THOUGHT MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT IS UTILIZATION. IF WE CAN GUARANTEE ADEQUATE UTILIZATION, GOS PROBABLY WILL BE EASY ON SHORT NOTICE. BEVAN SAID HE HAD PRESSED ROYAL NAVY ON THIS SCORE WITHOUT SUCCESS. ANY INFORMATION ON UTILIZATION PLANS BY USN WOULD BE HELPFUL. THIS PROBLEM WILL ALSO PARTLY DEPEND ON WHICH GOS AGENCY BECOMES MANAGER OF BERTHS SO NO FIRM RESPONSE CAN BE GIVEN TO U.S. QUERY UNTIL NEGOTIATIONS WITH SINGAPORE BEGIN.

5. REGARDING PARAGRAPH 4 REF. (B) DE COURCY-IRELAND ALSO SAID PRELIMINARY GOS/UK DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN HELD ON STANDARD STATEMENT AND INDICATIONS ARE THAT GOS WILL ACCEPT WITH MINOR CHANGES TO REFLECT GOS TAKEOVER. DE COURCY-IRELAND SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS HAVE ALSO BEEN HELD ON POSSIBLE TURNOVER OF SPECIAL NPW HANDLING EQUIPMENT TO GOS.

6. BOTH FCO OFFICIALS AGREED THAT THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE TIME PRESSURE ON UK PLAN BUT THEY FELT WE SHOULD MOVE BEFORE ALL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO UK PULLOUT FROM SINGAPORE START TO PILE UP. EARLY ACTION WOULD AVOID LINKAGE AND TIME SEEMS RIPE IN THAT UK RELATIONS WITH GOS VERY GOOD RIGHT NOW.

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7. COMMENT. WE ARE STILL STRUCK BY IMPRESSION THAT BRITISH ARE VERY ANXIOUS TO PROCEED ON BASIS THEIR PROPOSAL. IT APPEARS THAT THEY HAVE DONE A GREAT DEAL OF SPADE WORK WITH GOS AND GONZ AND ALSO WITH USN ON SERVICE BASIS. BUT THEY ARE NOT PRESSING US AND WILL ONLY TAKE FURTHER ACTION ON RECEIPT OF FIRM U.S. APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL.

RICHARDSON

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NNN

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